



Town of Carlisle

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Office of
PLANNING BOARD

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MINUTES

April 22, 1996

Presentation and Review of Plans for New Town Offices

Review of Draft Decision: Malcolm Meadows Special Permit for SROSC

DISCUSSION: **Petition for acceptance of Hartwell Road**
 Board dynamics and teamwork

Chair Colman called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. Colman, Duscha, Epstein, Tice and Yanofsky were present. Hengeveld and LaLiberte were absent. Also present was Planning Administrator Mansfield.

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of March 25, 1996 were incomplete. The minutes of the meeting of April 8, 1996 were approved as drafted 5-0 on a motion by Tice, seconded by Duscha, with the following amendments:

- p. 3: the last sentence of paragraph #2 is deleted on the suggestion of Tice after Duscha questioned its relevance;
- p. 4: replace "Land Tech" with "Town Counsel" on the suggestion of Epstein, who also suggested that the wording of the last paragraph be revised to describe in more general terms the changes proposed in the wording of the severable condition and contingent waiver for trail location;
- p. 5: substitute "Duscha" for "Yanofsky" at the beginning of paragraph #4;
- p. 6: correct the spelling of "units" under sec. 5.7.4.13 ;
also, make the plural possessive of "Evans" consistent throughout, and correct the spelling of "Colman" throughout.

Presentation and Review of Plans for New Town Offices

Ed Sonn, Chairman of the Town Office Building Committee presented the revised plans. Also present from the Committee were Tricia Smith, Bill Reeder and Michael Holland. Sonn explained that several steps have been taken to bring down the cost of the building

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on the Conant land on Westford Street since the plans were last presented before fall Town Meeting. First, the heating system has been modified to forced hot air from a combination forced hot air/forced hot water design. This will reduce the cost of the system from \$380,000 to \$139,000. Secondly, the architects recommended moving the building back on the lot approximately 80 feet, saving costs related to foundation issues and ledge. This will also allow the driveway to be relocated to the route of the existing cart path. Third, a widow's walk has been added on the roof to hide the external HVAC equipment. The relocation will eliminate the necessity of a zoning variance, but an easement will be needed from NYNEX for the corner of the parking lot. The lot is otherwise unchanged, Sonn said, except for the elimination of the turnaround circle.

Reeder explained that the septic system will be bid in two alternates, at its original location on the western portion of the site, and at a location to the north adjacent to the Police station septic field. He said that test pits have been dug that prove that it will function at this alternate site.

Colman noted that the driveway appears narrow with no turnaround, and Sonn agreed that 3-point turns would be necessary unless cars proceeded to the back of the lot.

Sonn further described internal modifications, which he said are slight. On the first floor a closet is added; on the second, there are new coat rooms to serve the three conference rooms. He added that since there is no basement, all utilities are on the first floor or the roof. In total, he said, the savings should total about \$400,000.

Colman asked about provision for future expansion. Sonn replied that an addition to the building would be feasible in the parking lot, and the lot could be shifted back. Colman also asked if at the relocated site would the building be less visible to the public, and Sonn said he thought it would be a little less prominent. Smith noted that the balloons that were placed to mark the site on a previous weekend showed that the building will have some amount of presence from the town center. She added that a new perspective rendering of the building on its site will be prepared before Town Meeting.

With reference to the previously proposed dual heating system, Colman asked what other "cadillacs," if any were still sitting in this building? Sonn replied that there are none that the Committee knows of, and explained that the problem with the former HVAC design was the inaccuracy of the cost estimation. Smith added that they had favored a very functional heating system with multiple zones, but had been unaware of its real price. Duscha asked whether the comparative operational costs of the new heating system vs. the originally proposed system had been taken into account. Smith replied that the new system is expected to be less efficient because it has fewer zones, but Colman cautioned that this factor may not make it any more expensive to run.

Ken Harte, 64 Estabrook Rd., asked about the access to the existing trail behind the site. Sonn replied that the trail will have access directly off the parking lot. Harte noted that the parking lot does not have a 40 foot setback from the property lines, as required by

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Sec. 5.3.5. of the Zoning Bylaw, and so will need a variance. Mansfield confirmed this observation, a situation similar to that faced in the recent Malcolm Meadows SROSC plans. Sonn said that he would check out this possible non-compliance.

Yanofsky asked about the proposed phases of the project. Sonn replied that, if approved by Town Meeting and the voters, the contract should be executed by July 1, 1996, and with an anticipated 9-month construction period, the offices should open by April 1, 1997.

Colman asked if this building will be more expensive to heat because it has no basement. Holland replied that savings from not heating the basement itself produces a trade-off.

Yanofsky asked the Committee to describe both the advantages and the shortfalls this building will have for town needs. Sonn replied that there will be sufficient space to house all current staff positions, plus a few more. Yanofsky asked him to be more specific. Smith replied that this building serves the community well with separate meeting spaces, all handicapped accessible. Mansfield asked if the conference rooms provide flexible space for different size meetings, including large public hearings. Holland replied that the largest conference room can seat 72 people, which is a little larger than the C.E.C. conference room. He added that the rooms do not contain dividers. Yanofsky asked what computer/video hook-ups or other communications technology is to be built in. Sonn replied that there is a drop at every work station linked to a central facility. Holland added that linked voice and data communications will be available at 30 locations.

Yanofsky asked about the total cost of the revised plans. Sonn answered that the estimate is \$1,565,000., or possibly a little lower. He said he expected a more precise estimate to be returned within the week. This estimate includes building and site work, including a 5% contingency, architectural and engineering fees, the design and purchase of furnishings, and the well and building permits. He said there will be five levels of bid alternates, including the septic system location, but he did not detail the other alternates. Yanofsky also asked for an estimate of maintenance costs, but Sonn could not provide that.

Mansfield raised a question of traffic safety on Westford St. and at the intersections on either side of the proposed new entrance. He suggested that with a new traffic destination on this block, an increase in difficult turning movements at the Concord St. and Church St. intersections with Westford St., where sight distances are inadequate, could diminish safety. Yanofsky recalled that this was not a new concern, concluding that the current town office location is safer because the traffic circle slows traffic flow. But Holland pointed out that the sight distance at the new driveway is in excess of 400 ft. in each direction, more than adequate and not obstructed by the ledge outcroppings. He noted that a few feet away, the NYNEX driveway has poor sight distance. Yanofsky suggested that a transportation planner be asked to analyze these intersections and tell us what may be needed in the future. Holland replied that he is a civil engineer and his

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work includes the design of roadways. He said the increase in traffic from this facility is a non-issue, particularly since the peak hours on Westford St. are before and after the town offices open and close. Yanofsky reiterated that her concern was the larger area from Concord St. to Rockland Rd; she asked whether impacts in this area had been assessed. Smith referred to a study done by Abend Associates for the town offices at the Congregational Church site that showed a peak hour count of only 11 vehicles. She said that traffic mitigation is not an issue. But Yanofsky pointed out that this was not an official study and added that she was concerned about night-time traffic peaks associated with public meetings.

Duscha also asked if there was any way to improve this portion of Westford St. Holland disputed the suggestion that this roadway was unsafe, but Harte suggested a 20 mph speed limit be imposed from Rockland Rd. to Concord St., and left turns be prohibited from Concord St. to Westford St. Yanofsky proposed that a letter be drafted to the Selectmen making these proposals, and Duscha asked that the advice of the Police Chief be sought first. To these suggestions Holland added that left turns also be prohibited from Church St. to Westford St., but Harte went even further and suggested that Church St. be made one-way eastbound. Mansfield agreed to seek the advice of the Chief on these proposals, noting that the speed limit reduction was probably in the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth, if as Rte. 225, Westford St. is a state highway.

Smith concluded that this has been a long interactive process to establish a town office building with many townspeople participating. Yanofsky said that, nevertheless, the Planning Board should assess this proposal as if it were put forth by a private developer.

(See discussion of Town Meeting issues below for additional information.)

Review of Draft Decision: Malcolm Meadows Special Permit for SROSC

Epstein focused on the severable condition on page 4 of the draft regarding the lack of trail locations in the open space on the plan. He asked whether the Board intended to grant a waiver of this requirement if the condition subsequently interferes with the receipt of the state reimbursement grant. Colman clarified the issue, pointing out that if the condition were severed, there would be no trails possible without a waiver or an amendment to the special permit. Duscha expressed concern that twenty years hence, senior residents of Malcolm Meadows could develop a problem with the trail use by the public, and finding no trails in the approved special permit, try to get them closed. Epstein replied that this was just such a situation that the present wording is designed to prevent. He said that this condition was written as a means to satisfy the time constraints surrounding the funding of this project, retain some possible control of future trail location by the Planning Board, but in no case to prevent the building of those trails. Yanofsky said that the condition reflects what she thought the Board had said. Colman added that he believes the condition reflects the Board's intent, even though it wasn't stated as such. Epstein said that on reflection, perhaps Two Rod Road should have been

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designated on the plan as a trail since that is very unlikely to change. He also suggested that the decision reference the relocation of the entrance road since the preliminary plan.

was approved

Mansfield noted that the draft does not reference the Master Deed and Condominium Trust documents by date, since they haven't yet been signed. Ken Harte explained that they will not be signed until after the closing, but Mansfield observed that the closing cannot take place until the permit is filed and the decision must reference specific, dated documents. Harte said that this is a "Catch-22." Colman, however, advised Harte to tell the applicant to date and sign the documents so the filing can proceed.

Mansfield called the Board's attention to his note on the failure of the Board to include a landscape buffer phasing condition in the special permit, a condition that had been discussed during the public hearing. But Duscha said that this was an abutters' concern and not that of the Board, and so suggested that no change be considered.

Epstein made a **motion to endorse the Malcolm Meadows Record Plan as an ANR Plan**, seconded by Tice. The motion was **approved 5-0**.

Epstein also noted that he was not happy with the response time and the quality of the work product from Kopelman and Paige on these and other documents submitted for their review, questioning specifically what "approved as to form" means. He asked that a review of their work be put on a future agenda. Colman proposed a conference call with Epstein, himself and the Kopelman attorneys.

Request for lot release, Tall Pines

Tice moved that **Lot 25 be released from Restrictive Covenant, as requested**. Duscha seconded the motion and it was **approved 5-0**. [Note: the lot to be released is correctly designated as Lot 25A.]

Request for refund of Project Review Fee balances: Cross St. Common Driveway (Fielding) and North Rd. Common Driveway (Shield)

Yanofsky moved and Duscha seconded a motion to **refund the balance in the Fielding 53G account, plus accrued interest**. The motion was **approved 5-0**.

Yanofsky moved and Tice seconded a motion to **refund \$758.68 in the Shield 53G account, plus accrued interest**. The motion was **approved 5-0**.

Town Meeting issues:

Town Offices

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Duscha commented that the earlier Committee presentation had been weak. She is concerned that the revised plan decreases the structure's visibility from the center of town, but seemingly no one has complained. Colman added that the parking layout is poor. Epstein asked whether the Fire Chief's approval had been given to the revised plan. Duscha said she heard them say he had looked at it, but did not remember any mention of approval.

Epstein and Yanofsky each stated that the Board's primary job is to assure safety and compliance with the master plan. However, it is difficult to ignore the question of civic presence. Tice commented that the best site would be that of St. Irene's church. Yanofsky said she plans to report on this presentation to the Long-Term Capital Requirements Committee, and asked if the Planning Board wished to prioritize among the three major capital projects, town hall, the school expansion and the library renovation. Duscha replied that this Board is best suited to address siting issues, which are not present in the other projects. But Yanofsky countered that all these projects have impacts on the Town budget and therefore on future services the Town can provide to serve development. Epstein said he doesn't feel qualified to prioritize.

On the town office building, Yanofsky concluded, the Committee has done the best job they can given the site, but they have not adequately considered the building in its context within the town center. She suggested a letter be drafted from the Board, as in the past, approving the plan but noting the diminished civic presence. She asked if the base letter sent last spring could be used again. Others preferred a new letter, supportive of the plan but with specific suggestions. In particular, it should note the traffic modifications proposed and the police response. Tice suggested that the letter indicate that the Board is pleased to have been asked for advice. The P.A. was asked to pull this together with the assistance of Yanofsky.

Petition to accept Hartwell Road

Yanofsky absented herself from this discussion. Other members explained that the Concord portion of this roadway, approximately the first 1000 feet, will never be accepted by that town as a public way. The Carlisle portion was built with several waivers that differentiate it from a standard public way, but the issue of future acceptance, unlike in Concord, was not memorialized. The real issue, members concluded, is whether the Carlisle school busses will go down a private road.

Mansfield suggested that the only role the Planning Board has is to determine whether the roadway as built and in its present condition meets the construction standards as set forth in the rules and regulations, taking the waivers into account. The school bus issue is irrelevant to the Board. Epstein said that there is not sufficient information in front of the Board to make a recommendation on acceptance. He asked that the item be put on the agenda for May 6, and that the petitioner, Mark Green, be invited to the meeting.

Discussion of growth management policies

Postponed to May 6.

Discussion of Board dynamics and teamwork

Duscha had prepared a memorandum on this subject with several suggestions that were discussed. Mansfield had also offered some notes and observations. Duscha expressed her concern that she doesn't feel as if the Board has developed sufficient strength. Yanofsky noted that these concerns had been discussed at the first Study Plan Subcommittee meeting, which Duscha had not attended. She said she doesn't know where other members stand, but it appears that Duscha is emphasizing form before content. Colman said he reads it that way too. Yanofsky explained that she has ordered an APA training videotape that she will share with Board members. Colman offered to speak with a group facilitator that he knows and also to pass on Duscha's memorandum. Epstein acknowledged that the Board had rallied around a set of difficult personal circumstances and pulled together to complete its work on Malcolm Meadows.

After additional general discussion of this matter, the members agreed to continue it on the next meeting's agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Mansfield
Planning Administrator